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Trucking Company Wins Award

MONDOVI -- The truck driving industry is plagued by companies and drivers who don't make safety a priority. They endanger other drivers, rigs and the customers they drive for when they skirt regulations and drive too many hours. The industry itself is trying to counter that by offering incentives like a National Safety Competition. The latest winning fleet is based right around here.

The 2,400 trucks at Marten Transport put on around 100 million miles a year, making safety a priority at the company.

"Safety in the transportation industry is really all encompassing," said Don Hinson, Marten Transport's Vice President of Operations. "It's about initial driver qualification, ongoing driver training."

And because of that dedication, Marten Transport was selected as the Grand Prize winner in the Truckload Carriers Association Fleet Safety Contest.

"It's a fiercely competitive process," Hinson said. "There are literally thousands of trucking companies here in the United States that are competing."

Marten Transport became the safest fleet in the country after initially finishing second for the lowest number of accidents per million miles. Then they had to complete an essay describing their safety operations. After which those operations were evaluated. Something that Marten Safety Director Dan Peterson said is not uncommon at Marten.

"We are highly critical of our drivers," Peterson said. They are monitored on a daily basis on their hours of service compliance and log books."

Both Hinson and Peterson credit low driver turnover as one of the main reasons for low occurrence of accidents.

This is the second time in four years Marten Transport has won the grand prize for safest fleet. An honor they say is more for bragging rights and customer confidence than anything else.